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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: MONETARY INCENTIVES FOR MARINE RECRUITERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Monetary Incentives for Marine Recruiters

Author: Major J. B. Loving, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: What is the feasibility of using monetary incentives as a means of increasing recruiter productivity?

Discussion: Since the draft was abolished in 1973, the Congress and Department of Defense have expressed concern about the services' ability to recruit sufficient numbers to maintain military effectiveness. Civilian versus military pay imbalances, mandatory service abroad and a declining propensity to enlist have all been given as reasons for recruiting shortfalls. Research to date has focused almost exclusively on finding ways to increase the propensity of young men and women to volunteer for military service. Little research has been focused on using incentives as a means of increasing recruiter productivity. Close examination of individual recruiter performances indicates widely varying levels of productivity. While the reasons for these varying levels of performance are numerous, the independent, time-intensive nature of recruiting leads this author to believe that individual recruiter initiative and desire are the largest determinants of success. A meaningful incentive program that rewards recruiters for producing above minimum established standards improves their initiative, desire and productivity. Currently, the Marine Corps has an incentive program that provides top-performing recruiters with meaningful rewards. What the Marine Corps incentive program lacks is a meaningful incentive for all recruiters that inspires them to continually strive to increase productivity throughout the duration of their tours.

Money and/or items of monetary value meet the criteria for "meaningful" incentives, however, because of ethical considerations and legislative restrictions, have never been used as an incentive for increasing recruiter productivity. Current Marine Corps recruiting doctrine, Systematic Recruiting, clearly distinguishes recruiter effort and productivity and makes it possible to fairly compensate Marines monetarily based upon their individual performances.

Conclusion(s) or Recommendation(s): The Marine Corps needs a daily incentive built-in to the current incentive program that targets all recruiters for the duration of their tours and inspires them to greater levels of productivity. Acknowledging the requirement for legislative changes, this author believes that such an incentive program could effectively fill the Marine Corps' incentive void and facilitate future mission attainment.

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Chapter 1

Making Marines and Winning Battles

For 225 years the Marine Corps has faithfully served the United States during peace and war. It continues to serve today in the much-heralded role of “Making Marines and Winning Battles.” The Corps is renowned not only for its prowess in combat but for its ability to transform young men and women into “well-rounded” individuals who dutifully serve their country and go on to become productive members of society. This transformation process begins with the Marine recruiter.

Recruiting has been called the most difficult and challenging duty a Marine faces short of combat. To locate, close with and enlist the young men and women the Marine Corps needs to fill its ranks, recruiters experience long hours, high stress and responsibility for a mission that is 100% quantifiable. “Success is non-negotiable” and “failure is not an option” are common battle cries in the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC). The 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General C.C. Krulak, described the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) as “the only unit in the Marine Corps in daily contact with an opposing force.”¹

The Marine Corps’ ability to win “the recruiting war” has been a story of unbridled success that currently stands at 65 consecutive months of mission attainment. The goal of this thesis is to help the Corps continue its current recruiting success by examining the use of monetary incentives as a means of increasing recruiter productivity. My focus on enlisted recruiting does not imply that officer recruiting is any less important but is done simply as a means of limiting the scope of the paper.

¹ General Charles C. Krulak, USMC, speech presented at the National Recruiting Conference, Coronado CA, October 1997.

On the Horizon

Recruiting Marines in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the Marine Corps is a continual challenge, as indicated by nearly every flag officer from every branch of service that addressed the Marine Corps Command and Staff College Class of 2001. Their consensus is that recruiting is difficult and is likely to become more so in the future. Two of these gentlemen used the terms “crisis” and “critical” in reference to meeting future recruiting requirements. When asked about the future of Marine recruiting, Major General Parks, the Commanding General of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, stated “I’m not optimistic that recruiting is going to get any easier during this decade, I think that recruiting and retention are going to continue to be a challenge at least through the end of this decade.”² What is certain is that young men and women are not volunteering to join the Marine Corps in sufficient quantity to meet accession requirements. At Marine Corps Recruiting Station New Jersey for example, only 6.8% and 8.2% of the over 1300 men and women enlisted during fiscal years 1999 and 2000 were volunteers.³ Former Marine Commandant, General C.C. Krulak, frequently referred to the Marine Corps “not as an all-volunteer force but as an all-recruited force.”

Many reasons have been offered for the recruiting challenges currently being faced and for those expected in the future. One general officer suggested that with the fall of the Soviet Union and decline of communism worldwide, it is becoming more

² General Gary L. Parks, Commanding General Marine Corps Recruiting Command, interview by author, 21 December 2000.

³ Recruiting Station New Jersey, M-5 Report, annual recruiting statistics/data for Fiscal Years 1999 & 2000, provided on 7 December 2000 by RS New Jersey.

difficult for the average American to understand the need for the military. His position was that the lack of a clearly recognizable “enemy” causes some of those considering a career in the military to question it as a viable option. Another observation, offered by professor Charles C. Moskos of Northwestern University in his book The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War, is that there is a growing misconception among civilians that service in the military equates to an excessive loss of independence and sacrifice of basic human rights.⁴ Whatever the reasons, numbers suggest that trouble looms on the horizon for all the services recruiting commands. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the percentage of America’s population needed to fill the active ranks has steadily declined to where it currently stands at approximately ½ of 1% of the total population. In spite of this reduced need however, all branches of the service have struggled to meet accession goals with several coming up short in recent years. In fiscal year 1998, the Army and the Navy failed to meet active duty enlisted accession requirements, achieving 99% and 88% respectively.⁵ In fiscal year 1999, the Army again fell short achieving only 92% of requirement while the Air Force came up short at 95% of mission.⁶ There are other indicators that recruiting struggles are likely to continue. Civilian versus military pay imbalances, required service abroad and the potential for being placed in harm’s way have all been given as reasons for recruiting shortfalls. Regardless of the reasons, it is safe to assume that the recruiting challenges currently being faced are not likely to go away.

⁴ Charles C. Moskos, The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 36.

⁵ Department of Defense, Annual Defense Report (Washington DC: GPO, 1998), Ch. 10, Table 15.

⁶ Department of Defense, Annual Defense Report (Washington DC: GPO, 1999), Ch. 10, Table 14.

Recruiter Selection and Training

Finding Marines willing to serve on the “front lines” of the recruiting war is a challenge. In order to meet this challenge, the Marine Corps developed a very meticulous and often painstaking process for selecting recruiters. It is a meticulous process because every Marine assigned to recruiting duty undergoes a thorough screening to determine suitability for the duty. Service records are reviewed, medical issues considered, credit checks performed and recommendations from current commanding officers required. The painstaking part of the selection process comes in assigning (and sometimes forcing) Marines to report to Recruiters School. Estimates vary as to how many Marines actually volunteer for recruiting duty but during the years from June 1997 to June 2000, less than 25% of the recruiters assigned to RS New Jersey were volunteers. A recently published article in the Marine Corps Times places the national figure at 28%.⁷ In either case, far more recruiters are “being volunteered” for recruiting than are actually volunteering themselves.

Once a Marine is selected for recruiting, he/she reports to Recruiters School at MCRD San Diego where they undergo a rigorous training and evaluation process. In order to successfully complete the school, Marines must demonstrate proficiency in basic recruiting skills in both classroom and “real-world” environments. Final evaluations are administered at the end of the five-week course and those who pass are assigned the 8411 military occupational specialty (MOS) of recruiter. Following graduation, recruiters report to one of 48 recruiting stations around the country where they receive final training, familiarize themselves with their area and begin their duties as a Marine

⁷ Darlene Himmelspace, “Selling the Corps: The Most Demanding Job Next to Combat,” *Marine Corps Times*, 22 January 2001, p. 14.

recruiter. This process ensures that every Marine assigned to recruiting duty has demonstrated the basic skills necessary to succeed and are all starting on a relatively equal footing. The effectiveness of this selection and training process is evidenced by the Marine Corps' 65 consecutive months of mission attainment.

Joining the Recruiting Station

After a recruiter reports to a recruiting station and undergoes final training, he/she is assigned to a geographically defined recruiting "sector." Many factors determine the size and shape of this geographic sector but the primary consideration is high school senior population. As much as possible, each recruiter is given a "fair share" of the recruiting station's high school senior population. New recruiters are assigned monthly, weekly and daily recruiting activity objectives to use until they establish their own "data" (recruiting activity averages). Recruiting activities are simply telephone calls, area canvasses (personal contacts in a recruiter's sector), or visits to a prospective applicants home. Recruiter's activity objectives vary across the country and change throughout the year but the following table gives an example of the activity objectives a new recruiter would typically be assigned ("Table 1. Recruiter Activity Objectives").

	Telephone Calls	Area Canvasses	Home Visits
Week 1	150	15	2
Week 2	150	15	2
Week 3	150	15	2
Week 4	150	15	2
Monthly Total	600	60	8

Table 1. Recruiter Activity Objectives

Source: "RS New Jersey Annual Recruiting Statistics,"
M-5 Report, 30 September 2000.

If conducted effectively, these recruiting activities should generate the number of new enlistments (2) a recruiter needs to achieve in a month in order to be considered successful. It is difficult to convert the above information into a "number of hours worked" because of the differences of each recruiting sector. Factors such as geographic size, population density and access to high schools vary widely across the country and impact on a recruiter's work hours. However, most would agree that, regardless of your locale, the above activities represent between a 50 and 70 hour, six-day work week.

What's in an Enlistment?

The amount of time expended by a recruiter to obtain one new enlistment is difficult to estimate because of countless tangible and intangible factors associated with recruiting across the country. However, standards of recruiting effectiveness have been established within the recruiting command to help focus commanders and staffs on areas

(or individuals) with potential for increased productivity. Using these standards, one can estimate the amount of time it should take an average recruiter to accomplish his mission. These standards of effectiveness are monitored and evaluated as part of Systematic Recruiting, which is the Marine Corps' recruiting doctrine. In Systematic Recruiting, potential applicants (prospects) are tracked from the time they are first contacted until they either decide to, or not to, enlist in the Marine Corps. Their movement through the enlistment process begins with initial contact by a Marine recruiter who seeks to schedule an appointment with the prospective applicant. At the appointment, the recruiter screens the applicant for disqualifications and if qualified, conducts an interview. Upon conclusion of the interview, the recruiter seeks an enlistment decision from the applicant. This entire process is called the "contact to contract chain" and is meticulously tracked and monitored against effectiveness standards. This information provides a good assessment of how much effort a recruiter is expending and helps to identify individual training needs. For example, one area in which standards of effectiveness exist is in telephone canvassing (telephonic recruiting). Taking into consideration a recruiter's area of operations, the month of the year and the time of day, one can estimate the number of phone calls a recruiter would need to make and how long it should take to make those calls in order to schedule an appointment. In this manner, recruiters establish and update their averages (as previously discussed) and leaders are able to supervise and train as necessary. The following chart depicts standard of effectiveness ratios for telephonic recruiting ("Table 2. Telephonic Recruiting Standards").

Phone calls: Contacts	Contacts : Appointments	Appointments : Interviews	Interviews: Enlistments
5:1	3:1	2:1	4:1
This column indicates that an average recruiter needs to make 5 telephone calls in order to contact 1 prospective	This column indicates that an average recruiter needs to contact 3 prospective applicants in order to schedule 1 appointment	This column indicates that for every 2 appointments, an average recruiter should be able to conduct 1 interview.	This column indicates that for every 4 interviews an average recruiter would achieve 1 enl.

Table 2. Telephonic Recruiting Standards

Source: “Guidebook for Recruiting Operations, Vol. III.”

This focus on telephone recruiting is not intended to be all inclusive but to illustrate one of the ways in which a recruiter’s productivity is supervised and evaluated. Contact can be made with prospective applicants by means other than the telephone such as personal contact or personal referral. This example is provided simply to demonstrate one of the means that exists to evaluate a recruiters daily activity and determine the amount of effort he/she is putting forth in order to be successful. It also shows that the current Marine Corps recruiting doctrine, Systematic Recruiting, clearly distinguishes recruiter effort and productivity and makes it possible to fairly compensate Marines based upon their individual performance.

Maintaining Enlistments

Recruiters are “responsible” for their recruits from the moment they are first contacted until they successfully complete recruit training. In many cases, this responsibility lasts for a year or more. New recruits can no longer ship to recruit training

immediately because of Department of Defense requirements for drug and HIV testing. Therefore, the vast majority of new recruits enter the Marine Corps' Delayed Entry Program (DEP). The DEP is a "pool" of recruits who have enlisted into the Marine Corps and are simply waiting to ship to recruit training. New recruits are authorized a maximum of 365 days in the DEP but can receive extensions on a case-by-case basis. This "pool" of recruits in the DEP represents the lifeblood of a recruiting station and is critical to long-term mission accomplishment. Recruits in the DEP are simply waiting to depart for recruit training at which time they are placed on active duty. Although administered an oath of enlistment, recruits in the DEP can still change their mind and decide not to ship to recruit training. This places a tremendous responsibility on recruiters to maintain contact with their "poolees" (recruits in the DEP) and keep them motivated until they ship. Additionally, recruiters are required to ensure that new recruits are able to pass an initial strength test (IST) upon arriving at one of the recruit depots. This physical fitness test consists of pull-ups, sit-ups and a timed run. Preparing new recruits to pass this test requires recruiters to conduct regularly scheduled physical training. Physical training for recruits waiting to ship to recruit training is normally conducted on Saturdays but can be conducted in the evenings during the week. Recruiters are also expected to conduct classes on basic Marine Corps knowledge, such as the rank structure, to further assist recruits in successfully completing recruit training. Finally, after recruits ship to recruit training, recruiters are required to maintain contact with them (in the form of letters) until they graduate from recruit training.

Recruiting Paradox

What quickly becomes obvious to someone newly assigned to recruiting duty is that the harder a recruiter works, the more enlistments that recruiter will achieve. The more enlistments that recruiter achieves, the more time that recruiter must invest in preparing those new enlistees for recruit training. The more time that recruiter spends preparing those new enlistees for recruit training, the less time that recruiter has available to recruit more new enlistees. That person newly assigned to recruiting duty inevitably falls upon the question “what does a recruiter get for enlisting more than the required number of new recruits?” Based on current recruiting doctrine, the only thing most recruiters get is the requirement to invest more time preparing those extra recruits for recruit training.

Comparative Analysis: Recruiters A, B, C & D

Having gained an appreciation for the amount of time and effort required to gain and maintain new enlistments, it is worthwhile to examine the performance of several recruiters during fiscal year 2000. The information in the table provided does not address every aspect of a recruiter’s job but does effectively portray individual productivity. Productivity is a widely used term on recruiting duty and it refers to the enlistment of new recruits into the Marine Corps. Average Productivity per Recruiter (APR) is the average number of enlistments a recruiter obtains each month and is what ultimately determines whether or not he/she is successfully accomplishing their mission. There are quality and placement criteria that are also assigned (and included in the table) to each new enlistment but the first priority is to achieve the assigned number of new enlistments.

The purpose of this comparative analysis is threefold. First, it will demonstrate the widely varying levels of performance by Marine recruiters. Second, it will demonstrate that systemically, there is no compensation for the majority of recruiters. Finally, it will highlight some of the leadership challenges inherent to recruiting duty.

The following table presents all contracting and shipping information for four recruiters during fiscal year 2000. Each of the recruiters has been on recruiting duty for more than a year and were on production during the entire 12 months of FY 2000. Table 3 provides quantifiable data that can be used to assess varying levels of recruiter productivity. (Recruiter Statistics for Fiscal Year 2000). Enlistment quality indicators are also provided in the table but will not be addressed as part of the comparison.

Recruiter	Net NC Qta	NC Ach	DEP Disc	Net NC Ach	Tier 1	Cat A	Shp	Cat A	MCRD Disc	FY M/on Prod	Total M/on Prod	Gros Prod	Net Prod
A	24	21	4	17	21	15	14	10	0	12	21	1.8	1.4
B	24	26	2	24	25	20	15	12	1	12	21	2.2	2.0
C	24	30	1	29	30	15	24	14	2	12	15	2.5	2.4
D	24	54	9	45	52	41	33	20	5	12	17	4.5	3.8

Table 3. Fiscal Year 2000 Recruiter Statistics

Source: "RS New Jersey Annual Recruiting Statistics,"
M-5 Report, 30 September 2000.

Note: Table legend on following page.

Legend

- NC Qta: Net New Contract Quota.
- NC Ach: Number New Contracts Achieved.
- DEP Disc: Delayed Entry Program Discharges (Number new contracts lost).
- Net NC Ach: Net Number of New Contracts Achieved.
- Tier 1: Number of High School Graduates Enlisted.
- Cat A: Number of Upper Mental Category Contracts Enlisted.
- Shp: Number of Recruits Shipped to Recruit Training.
- Cat A: Number of Upper Mental Category Recruits Shipped to Recruit Training.
- MCRD Disc: Number of Recruits Discharged from Recruit Training.
- FY M/on Prod: Number of Months on Recruiting during current FY.
- Total M/on Prod: Total Months on Tour to Date.
- Gros Prod: Gross Number of New Contracts Achieved
- Net Prod: Net Number of New Contracts Achieved

Recruiter A

For the twelve months of Fiscal Year 2000, Recruiter A was assigned a quota of 24 net new contracts (2 per month). Net new contracts means that Recruiter A was required to enlist 24 new recruits into the delayed entry program and replace any previously enlisted recruits who were no longer going to ship to recruit training (discharges). Towards his quota of 24 net new contracts, Recruiter A enlisted 21 new recruits and discharged 4 for a total of 17 net new enlistments for the FY. Dividing the 17 net new enlistments by the 12 months of the fiscal year, Recruiter A's monthly average for FY

2000 was 1.4. Given a standard of 2 net new enlistments per month, Recruiter A is producing well below the standard established to ensure the recruiting station makes its annual and monthly contracting missions. Based on his performance, Recruiter A's activities will be closely examined and additional training and supervision provided to correct areas of deficiency.

Recruiter B

Recruiter B was also assigned a net new contract quota of 24 for FY 2000. To that end he enlisted 26 new recruits into the delayed entry program against 2 discharges for a net new contract total of 24. Divided by the 12 months of the year we find that recruiter B was right on target at 2.0 net new enlistments per month. For his efforts this recruiter will likely receive outstanding marks on his next performance evaluation. Based on his performance, Recruiter B is performing to standard and will receive regularly scheduled training and supervision to help maintain his current level of proficiency.

Recruiter C

Recruiter C was also assigned a net new contract quota of 24 for FY 2000. To that end he enlisted 30 new recruits against 1 delayed entry program discharge for a net productivity of 2.4. Recruiter C's productivity was well above the 2.0 standard and deserving of special recognition. His performance demonstrates a willingness to put forth the extra effort needed to consistently overproduce and a willingness to sacrifice personal time preparing recruits for recruit training. He will certainly receive outstanding marks on his next performance evaluation and may be recognized with some type of

locally produced award. However, there is nothing built-in to current recruiting doctrine that recognizes Recruiter C for his overproduction.

Recruiter D

Recruiter D is the highest producing recruiter of the 50 recruiters in this particular recruiting station. Assigned a net new contract quota of 24, he enlisted 54 new recruits into the Marine Corps. He suffered 9 delayed entry program discharges for a net new contract total of 45 and an APR of 3.8 for FY 2000. As the top performer in the recruiting station, Recruiter D was meritoriously promoted to staff sergeant and awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. His performance is the result of an exhaustive work ethic, willingness to sacrifice and a tremendous desire to enlist new recruits. Current recruiting doctrine does an excellent job at recognizing and rewarding Recruiter D for his performance.

Performance Varies

These varying levels of performance can result from many factors, some of which are admittedly beyond a recruiter's ability to control. The geographic size of a recruiter's sector, population density and so on do present different challenges to each recruiter. However, all of these challenges can be overcome. The Marine Corps' recruiting doctrine, Systematic Recruiting, has numerous time-tested and effective ways for increasing a Marine's ability to overcome the various challenges of recruiting. What current Marine Corps recruiting doctrine lacks is a comprehensive and effective incentive program designed to increase a recruiter's desire to overcome these challenges and then

reward him/her for doing so. As a reminder, all recruiters go through the same screening, training and evaluation. All report to recruiting stations that are organized the same, conduct recruiting operations using the same doctrine and provide each recruiter with a fair amount of assets with which to recruit. Recruiter performances vary so widely because the single greatest determinant of ability is individual desire: desire motivates a recruiter to take the initiative to overcome the many challenges of recruiting duty. If a recruiter is willing to put forth the effort and make personal sacrifices, he/she will be productive on recruiting duty. This is not to suggest that all recruiters could perform to the level of Recruiter D. That would be naïve. It is not naïve however, to think that recruiter B could perform to the level of recruiter C if he/she desired to do so. Creating the desire in recruiters to not only make mission but to exceed mission is one of the keys to success on recruiting and is arguably the biggest leadership challenge. It is a challenge that could be made easier with a comprehensive and meaningful incentive program.

Skill is also essential to recruiter productivity and can be gauged to a lesser degree by the information provided in the table. However, given the independent nature of recruiting duty much, if not most, of a recruiter's skill will have to be developed "on the job." Recruiting is a fast-moving train that never stops. From the first month a recruiter is placed on production, he/she has a mission (quota). The importance of training and developing a recruiter's skill cannot be overstated however, training will always be conducted at the expense of actual recruiting. There is never a time when the clock is not ticking on the monthly mission. This type of environment places a premium on personal, professional development. The leadership principle of seeking self-improvement is a must on recruiting duty. The dynamic, often complex nature of recruiting demands

constant training, but the independent nature of recruiting requires recruiters to apply that training and develop their skills through personal study and practical application.

Instilling the desire to seek self-improvement is another area that could be enhanced by a comprehensive and meaningful incentive program that is embedded in recruiting doctrine.

Chapter 2

Current Incentives

An incentive by definition is something that “serves to encourage or move to action.”⁸ Incentives come in countless forms and can be either positive or negative. Both positive and negative incentives can be effective and both are used in Marine Corps recruiting doctrine. However, as Marine Corps recruiting doctrine exists today, only the negative incentives apply equally to all recruiters. Positive incentives only apply to the top recruiters, negative incentives apply to everyone.

The biggest negative incentive that motivates Marine recruiters to action is fear of failure. Failing to accomplish the assigned mission runs counter to the culture of Marines. It is an admission that there is a challenge that cannot be overcome (which is hard to accept after conquering the challenge of recruit training). It also means that one has let fellow Marines down. Failure is feared for more tangible reasons such as poor performance evaluations which in turn make Marines less competitive for promotion. On recruiting duty, failure also means that you receive extra training, extra supervision and have to work extra hours. Recruiting doctrine provides detailed instructions on how to assist struggling recruiters. It also provides thorough (and helpful) guidance on the procedures to be followed if, in spite of all best efforts, the command is unable to make a recruiter successful and he/she must be relieved. It is worth noting here that relieving a recruiter is always the last option and is tantamount to an admission of failure on the part of the recruiting station commanding officer. This is the case for two reasons. First, it is an admission that the recruiting station command group (commanding officer) was unable to effectively train and/or lead a subordinate to mission accomplishment. Second,

relieving a recruiter is a conscious decision to increase the burden on the other members of the command. Relieving a recruiter is comparable to suffering a combat casualty because replacements take several months to reach the recruiting station however, the recruiting station's mission does not decrease because it now has one less recruiter. The recruiting station must still "take the hill," it now just has one less recruiter to do it with (because of a self-inflicted casualty.)

The Marine Corps has several positive incentives in its current recruiting doctrine as well. Top performing recruiters receive meritorious promotions, medals and the opportunity to advance to positions of greater responsibility. The operative word with regard to these positive incentives is "top" performers. For example, consider Recruiters A, B, C & D above. Recruiter D has in fact received a meritorious promotion to staff sergeant, but what about recruiters B & C? They each met or exceeded the established standard however, any incentive they receive will come as the result of some type of ad hoc incentive program. There is no incentive built-in to current recruiting doctrine that inspires Recruiters B & C to produce more or rewards them for their willingness to overproduce. To gain an appreciation for how many Marines fall into the category of "middle-performers," let's examine the remaining recruiters in A, B, C & D's recruiting station ("Table 4. Productivity Ranges"). There are 50 recruiters on production in this particular recruiting station with productivity numbers broken down as follows:

⁸ *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*, 3d ed., unabridged, under the word "incentive."

<u>Category</u>	<u>Productivity Range</u>	<u>Number of Recruiters</u>
1	0.0 – 1.7	9
2	1.8 – 1.9	8
3	2.0 – 3.0	28
4	Above 3.0	5

Table 4. Productivity Ranges

Source: “RS New Jersey Annual Recruiting Statistics,”
M-5 Report, 30 September 2000.

(The productivity ranges are broken down as they are because the exact average required by recruiter for the RS to make its annual mission is 1.76 [1060/50/12] net).

(The above chart was created by this author and is not a doctrinal categorization of recruiters).

There are doctrinal incentives that apply to Marines in categories 1, 2 and 4. So what is the incentive for the recruiters falling into category 3? Or stated another way, what is the incentive for the majority of recruiters to produce above the minimum standard of 2.0? There are no doctrinal incentives that apply to Marines in category 3. Any incentive that targets Marines in category 3 will be a non-doctrinal incentive developed at some level of the recruiting command that is designed to give Marines recognition for their outstanding performance. Simply stated, incentives that target the majority of the Marines in the recruiting command are left up to the imagination of recruiting commanders. It was stated several times in the surveys and during personal interviews that one of the biggest challenges faced by recruiting station commanding

officers is coming up with a “gimmick of the month.” This refers to a meaningful, comprehensive incentive (to augment meritorious promotions and medals) that will inspire Marines to increase productivity. This need exists because there is no systemic incentive that exists, day-in and day-out that is available to all Marines and encourages them to increase productivity. What is puzzling is that the lack of an effective incentive program seems to be recognized at all levels of the recruiting command. Every winter the Marine Corps Recruiting Command conducts a seasonal recruiting campaign designed to motivate Marines to increase productivity during the difficult (and critical) winter recruiting months. These winter campaigns have specific recruiting objectives based on the current enlistment needs of the Marine Corps (namely, high school graduates who are available to ship to recruit training within 30-60 days). The objectives of these campaigns are very specific and recruiter performances are easily tracked using the existing recruiting doctrine. Awards to be given are extensively publicized and individual recruiter progress is tracked (and published) daily during the campaign to spur competition. Lasts year’s winter campaign used a baseball theme that awarded recruiters with pennants, baseballs, caps and bats. Top performers received medals with the most productive recruiters receiving meritorious promotions.

With the value of using incentives so widely recognized, why is there not an incentive program built into recruiting doctrine that is meaningful, inspiring and awardable to every recruiter who exceeds productivity requirements?

Sister Service Incentive Initiatives

Since the draft was abolished in 1973, all of the services have used various incentive programs to influence recruiter productivity. Many aspects of these programs, are common to all of the services and most remain in effect. Examples of these “permanent” incentives are Recruiter of the Year, Quarter and Month awards, unit awards and end of tour awards for each level of command (national, regional, district, et cetera). Each of the services have also used additional incentive programs to augment the permanent ones. These “augmenting” incentive programs were implemented for specific periods of time and tailored to meet the needs of the individual service. They differed vastly between the services with some focusing on increasing the quantity of enlistments while others targeted quality or specific occupational specialties. In some cases, these incentive programs were used to hedge against projected shortfalls while in other cases they were used to offset the impact of poor retention or service downsizing. While the objectives and design of these “augmenting” programs differed, the actual incentive “awards” did not. Department of Defense restrictions on authorized incentive awards meant that the items presented to the recruiters/units in each of the services were virtually identical. These authorized awards were presented primarily to the “top performing” recruiters and ranged from personal mementos and plaques to meritorious promotions. Several of these “augmenting” incentive programs are summarized in the sections that follow.

Program 300 and Success 2000

From November 1982 until October 1994, the Army operated under an incentive plan called Program 300.⁹ The goal of this program was to improve both the quantity and quality of enlistments (as measured by high school graduation percentages and scores on entrance examinations). Recruiter performance was tracked for 6 month intervals and points were assigned based on individual performance. Recruiters earning 300 points during any 6-month period received an award with top awards going to the recruiters who earned the most points. There were also unit awards given to the top performing companies, battalions and brigades. In fiscal year 1995, the Army implemented a new incentive program called Success 2000.¹⁰ This program, which retained many of the features of Program 300 (incentive items, point system), placed greater emphasis on attainment of unit vice individual missions (quotas) as a means of increasing morale within the recruiting command.

The Freeman Plan

In fiscal year 1979, the Navy implemented “a recruiter productivity and management system” known as the Freeman Plan.¹¹ This was designed to boost the quantity of enlistments in anticipation of projected personnel shortfalls. This plan differed from previous Navy initiatives in that it assigned quotas to individual recruiters vice units and it incorporated meritorious promotions for top performing recruiters. It

⁹ Carole Oken, *Encouraging Recruiter Achievement: A Recent History of Military Recruiter Incentive Programs*, MR-845-OSD/A (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., October 1997), 19.

¹⁰ Carole Oken, *Encouraging Recruiter Achievement: A Recent History of Military Recruiter Incentive Programs*, MR-845-OSD/A (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., October 1997), 20.

was a national program that offered incentives based on a point system that rewarded recruiters for the quantity and quality of net new contracts. The program remained in effect through fiscal year 1988 at which time other initiatives were implemented to address specific personnel shortages.

The Competition System and The Incentive Awards Program

In 1979, the Air Force initiated a formal incentive program known as The Competition System.¹² This program was designed “to stimulate groups and squadrons to recruit in specific enlistment categories.” This program offered the same incentives awards as other service programs and rewarded recruiters not for the quantity of enlistments but for filling specific occupational specialties. The Air Force initiated a follow-on incentive program in 1994 that was called the Recruiting Service Incentive Awards Program. It was similar to the Competition System but expanded the awards to include the quantity of enlistments as well as continuing to recognize recruiters who filled critically short occupational fields. Each of these programs was managed using a point system and awards for both included plaques, trophies, watches and “other prizes.”

Despite having some unique characteristics, each of the services recruiter incentive programs have been largely the same. As such, all have had the same advantages and limitations as the Marine Corps incentives previously discussed.

¹¹ Asch, Beth J., *Navy Recruiter Productivity and the Freeman Plan*, R-3713-FMP (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., September 1990), 1.

¹² Carole Oken, *Encouraging Recruiter Achievement: A Recent History of Military Recruiter Incentive Programs*, MR-845-OSD/A (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., October 1997), 35.

Corporate America/Think-Tank Findings

Monetary incentives are common in civilian sales organizations and are as diverse as the organizations themselves. Cash bonuses, profit sharing, cars and trips are frequently offered to gain increased sales, greater output or employee referrals. Each November FAO Schwartz offers \$500 cash bonuses to permanent employees who "recruit" temporary employees to work for the duration of the holiday season. These monetary incentives can be very effective, but are such incentives a viable option for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command? No one knows. Monetary incentives have never been used as an incentive for increasing recruiter productivity so no historical evidence exists from which to draw conclusions. Additionally, behavioral research to determine how money influences behavior has never been done on military recruiters. Such research, requiring the development of multiple empirical models, has not been done because current legislation mandates that all service members of equal grade and time in service receive equal monetary compensation regardless of occupational specialty or performance. A recruiting-related Rand Institute study published in 1997 addressed the feasibility of using monetary incentives for military recruiters as follows:

“Answering the question (Are monetary incentives feasible) requires several inputs. First, one needs a model of recruiter behavior and how it responds to various factors, including monetary incentives. Second, one needs empirical estimates based on this model that will indicate how recruiter behavior and therefore recruiting outcomes respond to alternative incentive plan features. Although past research has provided some insights into how recruiter behavior responds to incentive systems, that earlier work did not take a broad approach exploring such options as monetary incentives.”¹³

¹³ Carole Oken, *Encouraging Recruiter Achievement: A Recent History of Military Recruiter Incentive Programs*, MR-845-OSD/A (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., October 1997), 62.

Acknowledging the lack of quantifiable behavioral research, several researchers have suggested the use of monetary incentives for military recruiters based on their recruiting related studies. In 1998, a Center for Naval Analyses working group was formed to “re-think the way we (the Navy) recruit, train, assign and retain our forces.”¹⁴ This work titled Recruiting, Retention, Training and Assignment offered several suggestions for improving the effectiveness of military recruiters, one of which was using monetary incentives:

"Pay recruiters a bonus based on actual accessions. The size of the payment should depend on the type of recruit (quality, occupational skill) as well as the success of the recruit (through basic training perhaps)."¹⁵

In 1999, the Rand Corporation published a similar study on recruiting trends and their implications for the future of recruiting that suggested the following:

"Provide \$500 to recruiting stations for each high quality (mental categories I-III A) recruit completing boot camp over and above the recruiting station's goal. This award is consistent with professional corporate recruiting practices."¹⁶

Though some research has touched on the use of monetary incentives, little is actually known about its effectiveness as a performance incentive. This suggests further study in the area is needed to determine the viability of monetary incentives for overcoming future recruiting shortfalls.

¹⁴ Center for Naval Analyses, “Recruiting, Retention, Training and Assignment,” unpublished research paper, no. (CNA) 98-1452, November 1998, 2.

¹⁵ Center for Naval Analyses, “Recruiting, Retention, Training and Assignment,” unpublished research paper, no. (CNA) 98-1452, November 1998, 36.

¹⁶ Murray, Michael P., *Recent Recruiting Trends and their Implications for Models of Enlistment Supply*, MR-847-OSO/A (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., October 1999), 71.

SDA Pay

In Marine Corps Order 7220.12m, SDA pay is defined as “a monthly monetary incentive that is paid to enlisted members who are required to perform extremely demanding duties with an unusual degree of responsibility.” Actually, as the Marine Corps uses SDA pay, it would be more accurately defined as a monetary supplement designed to offset the hardships of a particular duty. In the case of recruiters, this “supplement” is justified and well deserved, but it does not meet the definition of an incentive. First of all, every Marine assigned the MOS of 8411 (recruiter) receives SDA pay regardless of performance. Secondly, many Marines with the 8411 MOS receive SDA pay but are not actually serving as recruiters. These are Marines serving in recruiter support billets on the various recruiting staffs, at Military Entrance Processing Stations and at the recruit depots. Further evidence suggests that SDA pay was not intended to be an incentive. In Fiscal Year 1995, recruiter SDA pay was raised from \$275 to \$375 per month for all DOD recruiters. This decision was made in response to a DOD survey that indicated “increasing recruiter stress and job dissatisfaction, lower morale, and quality of life” [as compared to active duty service members not serving on recruiting duty].¹⁷ DOD approved this initiative with “the goal of reducing recruiter pressures.” These points are not made to question the use of SDA pay on recruiting duty but to highlight the fact that SDA pay is not intended to and does not “serve to encourage or move to action” as defined in Marine Corps Order 7220.12m.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, Annual Defense Report (Washington DC: GPO, 1995).

The Power and Drawbacks of Money

The “Quarter Billion Dollar Man”, “Gladiator Slays Sales Record” and “Dow Surges 352 Points” were all Washington Post headlines during the week 2-9 December 2000. These headlines, referring to Alex Rodriguez’ 252 million dollar baseball contract, to DVD sales of the movie *Gladiator*, and to a particularly good day on Wall Street made headlines because MONEY gets people’s attention. Right or wrong, or amoral, money appeals to almost everyone and can motivate people to excel and overcome great challenges. Adventurers throughout history have circled the globe in search of gold and silver. Wars have been fought over gaining and retaining national treasure. Referring to the 18th century Great Power struggle between Britain and France, Paul Kennedy in his book The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers states, “Given such expensive and exhausting conflicts, what each side desperately required was – to use the old aphorism – “money, money, and yet more money.”¹⁸ Ethical considerations aside, money has universal appeal to almost everyone and is indisputable as a powerful tool for motivating people to action.

The primary problem with using monetary incentives is the “head hunter” or “bounty-hunter” theory. These theories maintain that if monetary incentives are used, recruiters will be unable to resist the temptation of unethical recruiting practices to obtain a higher number of enlistments and in turn make more money (if nothing else, these theories give merit to the motivational power of money). But where did these theories come from and are they true? “Imaginative” recruiting practices have existed for hundreds of years. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries citizens of conquered

¹⁸ Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987), p. 76.

European states were commonly forced into military service. The war of 1812 was largely over the impressments of American sailors into service in the Royal Navy. These practices, as barbaric as they seem however, are not the source of today's attitudes. It is more likely that today's monetary incentives phobia stems from America's transition to an all-volunteer service that occurred near the end of the Viet Nam War. In June, 1973, the draft was abolished and America converted to an all-volunteer force. This placed a tremendous burden on the individual services who now had to concentrate not only on winning a war but also on demonstrating their viability as a service by maintaining assigned manning levels. This led to intense pressure being placed on recruiters to meet enlistment quotas during a time when service to our country was at an all time low. The consequences for recruiters not meeting their monthly quotas were much the same as they are today: punitive action that could lead to relief of duties. This fear/leadership by intimidation led to many recruiters succumbing to the pressure and fraudulently enlisting young men and women into the service. These unethical practices included cheating on entrance exams, concealing known police involvement and forging high school education records (among other things). All branches of the service were guilty of these well-documented fraudulent recruiting practices which reached their peak in 1978. In that year, the United States Army relieved 5 officers and 427 enlisted recruiters nationwide from 48 of their 55 recruiting commands for recruiting malpractice.¹⁹ Interestingly enough, monetary incentives played no part in these illegal practices. In fact, money has never been used as a performance incentive designed to increase recruiter productivity. There is no hard evidence to support the belief that money will lead to a "bounty hunter" mentality because monetary incentives have never been used.

¹⁹ Michael Knight, "427 Army Recruiters Relieved," *New York Times*, 20 November 1978, Final Ed., A18.

Another concern regarding the use of monetary incentives is public perception. There exists a belief among many surveyed that the general public would not approve of a policy in which recruiters were paid monetary incentives. While expressing the views of the American public is well beyond the scope of research conducted for this paper, I do offer one point. Seventeen Marines surveyed commented that they have had experiences in which either an applicant, their parents or both were surprised to find that recruiters do not receive monetary incentives based on their performance. This input was particularly interesting because it was not a question asked on the survey. In each case, the information was provided as an additional comment to the question of whether a recruiter's SDA pay should be related to his performance. This suggests that public perception to the use of monetary incentives may not be as bad as currently assumed.

Chapter 3

Recruiting Survey

Appendix A is a copy of a survey completed by 208 current and former members of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The survey was intended to solicit input and opinions from Marines with recruiting experience. It was not designed to determine averages or collect statistical data and does not meet the criteria established for randomness and representative sampling. Conclusions drawn from the input provided are purely this author's interpretations and in no way represent the views of the Marine Corps or the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The input received was very informative and the many right-in comments suggest that the use of monetary performance incentives is a very contentious issue on which nearly everyone has an opinion.

The quantitative/numerical results of the survey can be found in Appendix B. I have provided my interpretation and summation of those results in the following sections.

- **Opinions on the Marine Corps' Current Use of Monetary Incentives**

The first three questions of the survey addressed the Marine Corps' current use of monetary incentives (which does not include recruiting duty). Most responses considered flight pay and the various recruiting bonuses offered to new enlistees as an effective use of monetary incentives. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not consider SDA pay a monetary incentive but rather a monetary supplement designed to offset the increased expenses associated with independent duty. These expenses include, but are not limited to, not having access to commissaries

and post exchanges, high cost of living areas (\$12 haircuts) and making up for shortfalls in variable housing allowance (VHA) and basic allowance for quarters (BAQ). It is also widely believed that SDA pay is designed to offset some of the costs associated with recruiting such as administrative fees incurred when obtaining police and court record verifications, purchasing prospective applicant lists and assisting applicants in resolving personal matters.

- Could Money Be an Effective Performance Incentive for Recruiters?

Over half of the respondents (55%) were of the opinion that money could be an effective performance incentive for Marine recruiters. However, nearly all in favor of a monetary incentive program felt that it should be offered in addition to the SDA pay already being given to recruiters. In this manner, SDA pay would continue to offset the additional costs incurred on independent duty while the monetary incentive program could be used to increase productivity.

- Should SDA pay be related to performance?

The majority of responses felt that SDA pay should not be related to performance. Many commented that the stress of recruiting was bad enough without adding another stressor. Others felt that performance basing SDA pay could lead to unethical recruiting practices. Respondents who favored performance basing SDA pay felt that it could motivate some

to put forth more effort while properly rewarding those who were performing at or above the standard.

- If adopted, What Type of Performance Related SDA Pay System Should Be Used?

This question, as worded, suggested that SDA pay should be related to a recruiter's performance and offered options for such a program. As previously discussed, the overwhelming majority of respondents did not feel that SDA pay should be related to performance and therefore did not select any of the options provided. This question did however, receive the most write-in comments on the survey many of which suggested using performance related monetary incentives in addition to SDA pay. Of the 208 who completed surveys, 118 selected one of the options provided and the breakdown of those selections can be found in Appendix B.

Numerous suggestions for monetary incentive programs were offered and several will be addressed in a later section. In spite of the wide variety of responses received, it is possible however, to draw several conclusions from reading the input. First, whether in favor of or opposed to the use of monetary incentives, nearly all feel that such a program would have to be implemented in addition to the SDA pay currently being provided.

Secondly, that any type of monetary incentive program used would have to include quality control measures that focused on delayed entry program and MCRD attrition to prevent fraudulent enlistments. Third, that it

would have to be awardable to every Marine and not just the top performers or the best recruiting substations. Finally, that the program criteria would have to be standardized and incorporated into recruiting doctrine (like SDA pay) and not left to the discretion of local commanders.

- SDA Pay for Recruiters Serving in “Off-Production” Billets

Over half (55%) of respondents felt that recruiters serving in “off-production” billets should receive either reduced or no SDA pay.

Comments provided addressed the shorter working hours and reduced stress associated with “off-production” billets. Others stated simply that “off-production” recruiters are not assigned a recruiting mission (quota) and should therefore not receive SDA pay. Proponents of full SDA pay for “off-production” recruiters emphasized that “off-production” recruiters incurred the same expenses associated with independent duty that production recruiters did and should therefore receive full SDA pay.

Survey Summary

The survey focused on the Marine Corps’ use of monetary incentives in general and its use of SDA pay for recruiters in particular. As previously discussed, nearly every respondent expressed the view that SDA pay was not an incentive at all but a monetary supplement provided to offset the additional expenses associated with the independent nature of recruiting. After reading the input provided, I too am of the opinion that SDA

pay is actually being used as a pay supplement to offset such things as the lack of access to base facilities (commissaries and post exchanges) and to make up for shortfalls in VHA and BAQ. This perception and use of SDA pay is inconsistent with its intended purpose as stated in MCO 7220.12m which defines SDA pay as “a monthly monetary incentive that is paid to enlisted members who are required to perform extremely demanding duties with an unusual degree of responsibility.”

Opinions on the use of monetary performance incentives vary greatly based on perspectives. While nearly all respondents felt that SDA pay should not be related to performance, over half felt that some sort of monetary incentive program, used in addition to SDA pay, would increase recruiter productivity. Surveys completed by those in positions of leadership felt that monetary incentives would provide an effective “supporting arm” in the fight to make mission. Leaders also felt it would help overcome the span of control challenges associated with recruiting and fairly compensate recruiters who were producing above established standards. Recruiters felt that monetary incentives, offered in addition to SDA pay, would provide fair compensation for the overachievers and promote greater productivity.

Incentive Options

Information provided in the surveys clearly established four criteria for an effective performance-based monetary incentive program. First, that monetary incentives be offered in addition to SDA pay. Second, that quality control measures should be used to protect against fraudulent enlistments. Third, that the incentives be awardable to every

recruiter and lastly, that the incentives have clearly defined criteria that are not subject to change by local commanders (the moving target syndrome).

Any incentive program designed to meet these criteria could be categorized as an “all or nothing” program or a “pro-rated” program. An “all-or-nothing” program is one that would reward all recruiters who meet or exceed one predetermined criteria. The award would be the same for all recruiters and the program could cover any duration of time. For example, any recruiter who met or exceeded a 2.5 APR (monthly average) would receive the monetary reward. A “pro-rated” program is one that would establish different performance levels and would give greater rewards for each higher level of performance. As an example, a recruiter who maintained a 2.5 APR would receive one amount while a recruiter who maintained a 2.6 would receive more, a 2.7 more and so on. Either method could be effective depending on the duration of the incentive period, quality control measures, et cetera. Additionally, creation of either type of incentive program would be relatively effortless since all of the criteria needed for tracking such a program currently exists in recruiting doctrine and is being used to identify training and supervision requirements and to determine recipients of meritorious promotions and medals.

“Time off”, though not a topic of this thesis, should be mentioned as a performance incentive because it was frequently suggested by survey respondents as an alternative to money. “Time off” does meet all of the criteria established above for being an effective performance incentive. However, time off, used as an incentive, presents one significant drawback. Extended periods of time off can adversely affect future recruiting performance. Recruiting, for the individual recruiter, has many similarities to a

“movement to contact” operation. Success is achieved by gaining and maintaining contact with prospective applicants. This principle is at the very heart of recruiting doctrine (Systematic Recruiting) and is the rationale behind the extensive use of prospect tracking cards. Therefore, just as you would not intentionally break contact during a movement to contact operation, recruiters are taught not to break contact with prospective applicants. “Time off”, offered as a performance incentive, would have the undesirable effect of rewarding a recruiter for superior performance by positioning him for failure in future recruiting endeavors. While many recruiters have the ability to recover from such extended periods of time off, it does not negate the fact that all recruiters would “lose ground” while away from their sectors and should not be encouraged to this end. Additionally, most outstanding recruiters are also very loyal, team-oriented Marines who would forego their awarded time off if their presence were needed in the recruiting station to help make mission. An incentive program that used “time off” as a reward for superior performance would inevitably lose its incentive value and not add to recruiter productivity.

Leadership

The role of leadership on recruiting duty has purposefully been omitted to this point in favor of a more objective analysis of tangible recruiting issues. Leadership is however, critical to success on recruiting duty and to understand its importance, it is first necessary to understand the organization of a recruiting station. Every Marine Corps recruiting station is assigned a geographic area of responsibility. Recruiting station commanding officers subdivide this area of responsibility into recruiting substations

(RSSs) that are led by noncommissioned officers in charge (NCOICs). These RSSs, usually led by staff noncommissioned officers, are further subdivided into recruiting sectors in which individual Marines are assigned to recruit. Sizes of recruiting stations vary around the country but most encompass several states and cover thousands of square miles. Using Recruiting Station New Jersey as an example, it encompasses an area of approximately 7,500 square miles spread across two states. Recruiting Station New Jersey is subdivided into thirteen RSSs that are further subdivided into 50 recruiting sectors. Most of the challenges associated with leading a recruiting station are command and control issues that arise from time/space factors. Personal contact between commanding officers and Marines is often limited to once per month and in many cases, once every other month. Contact between RSS NCOICs and recruiters is usually daily but only for brief periods of time. The individual recruiter operates alone for the vast majority of the time and must rely on initiative, motivation and personal desire to succeed to overcome the daily challenges of recruiting. Understanding the independent nature of recruiting duty is essential to understanding the requirements of recruiting leaders to motivate and inspire subordinate recruiters. Effective recruiting leaders must be able to instill a desire to succeed in their recruiters that lasts for 36 months. The independent nature of recruiting duty limits the amount of personal, hands-on leadership that can be provided to individual recruiters. As a result, the most commonly practiced means of instilling and maintaining that desire to succeed in recruiters is through the use of incentives. A comprehensive, doctrinal incentive program that helps instill a desire to succeed in all recruiters would support the efforts of recruiting leaders at all levels.

The Stigma of Money

“I do solemnly swear to support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic” So begins the oath of service into the United States Armed Forces. By taking this oath, young men and women assume a tremendous amount of responsibility to uphold the traditions and customs of their particular service. Anyone who takes this oath also realizes that he may one day be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. This moral contract is entered into for love of country not money. To suggest that Marine recruiters receive monetary incentives is perceived by some to be tantamount to calling Marines mercenaries. “Marines didn’t assault up Mount Suribachi for the money” was a survey comment provided by an opponent to monetary incentives. Though true, this comparison is unfair. A world war that threatened the existence of many nations, including our own, appeals to a much higher calling than meeting the accession needs of the Marine Corps. Nevertheless, arguing that Marines accomplish the mission because it is their job is a valid one. In fact, it is this singular focus on mission accomplishment that has made the Marine Corps Recruiting Command the most successful of all the services recruiting commands. To this well defended position on the moral high (which I greatly appreciate) I humbly suggest that we consider making allowances to compensate those Marines who have established the Marine Corps Recruiting Command as the premiere recruiting command in the Department of Defense.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

Current Marine Corps recruiting doctrine (Systematic Recruiting, guidebooks, training standards, etc.) does not provide a meaningful, daily incentive to all recruiters for increasing productivity. Meritorious promotions, medals and the opportunity for professional advancement are effective incentives that currently exist but can be awarded to only a very few. A recruiter must be in the top 5-10% of all recruiters in his/her recruiting station in order to have a chance at receiving one of these rewards. Current recruiting doctrine also provides effective means for developing the bottom 10-20% of recruiters. Additional training, supervision and counseling is conducted and several means for doing so are provided in recruiting instructional manuals and reference publications. Procedures established are effective at making Marines successful and increasing productivity but again applies only to a small minority of recruiters. The lack of a comprehensive incentive program available to all recruiters creates an environment in which the only “reward” most recruiters receive for producing above a 2.0 is the requirement to do more work in maintaining and preparing those extra recruits for recruit training. What is needed is a daily incentive built-in to current recruiting doctrine that targets all recruiters for the duration of their recruiting tours. An analogy provided during an interview effectively summarizes this point.

An outstanding recruiter is one that maintains a 2.0 APR, low DEP and MCRD attrition and maintains 95/63 quality numbers. This Marine earns the respect of his peers, receives recognition from the command and an outstanding fitness report. Using a PFT analogy, this recruiter’s performance is the equivalent of scoring a 300. What is needed in our current system is an incentive that inspires

outstanding performing recruiters to try to be even “more” outstanding. Using the PFT analogy, it would be the equivalent of having an incentive program that inspires Marines to score 305, 310 or higher on the PFT even though 300 is all that is required to be outstanding. This incentive needs to be part of recruiting doctrine so that it applies to all Marines equally and is not based on the desires of the current commanding officer. In this way, the incentive program would gain credibility, like meritorious promotions, and provide an incentive to increase productivity continually throughout a recruiter’s 36 month tour.

The effectiveness of incentive programs is well established and the need for a permanent incentive program that targets all Marines seems to be recognized. Each winter (February, March, April and May), a seasonal campaign is conducted by the Marine Corps Recruiting Command that is designed to spur productivity among all recruiters across the nation. Locally, monthly campaigns are conducted by individual recruiting stations that are designed to increase the productivity of recruiters and/or to meet specific RS needs. However, there does not exist an incentive program built into current recruiting doctrine (comparable to meritorious promotions) that rewards every Marine for performing above the standard and provides an incentive to continually strive to increase productivity. SDA pay is a good program, fully justified in this author’s opinion, because it helps offset the additional expenses incurred by recruiters for not having access to base facilities; but in no way does SDA pay serve as an incentive to increasing productivity.

The two biggest concerns associated with using monetary incentives are an increase in fraudulent enlistments and negative public perception. Fraudulent enlistments occur today and are likely never to be eliminated. While the use of money as a performance incentive may cause some recruiters to compromise their integrity, there is

no historical evidence to support this. Money has never been used as a performance incentive for recruiters and cannot be blamed for unethical recruiting practices of the past. Nevertheless, preventative steps would need to be taken. Several quality control measures currently exist in systematic recruiting that, if enhanced, could provide an effective means of detecting fraudulent enlistments. These improved quality control measures coupled with stricter punishments would likely prevent a significant rise in fraudulent enlistments. Public opinion, which was also presented as a concern, is important but hard to predict. As expressed in several surveys, some members of the public already believe that recruiters receive monetary performance incentives. Public perception is critical to the success of an all-volunteer service and would require detailed study prior to the implementation of any monetary incentive program.

Effective leadership is what is currently making up for the lack of a comprehensive recruiter incentive program and is largely responsible for the Marine Corps' success. Accepting this, the Marine Corps has two options. First, it can maintain the status quo into the future and rely on the effectiveness of Marine Corps leadership to instill the desire in recruiters to succeed, or it can develop and incorporate a more robust and comprehensive incentive program that supports current leadership efforts at increasing recruiter productivity. Acknowledging the requirement for legislative changes, this author believes that a properly designed monetary incentive program could effectively fill this incentive void. Table 5 with accompanying notes offers an example of such a program.

APR	Mental Category (Minimum)	Education Level/Tier I (Minimum)	MCRD Attrition (Maximum)	DEP Attrition (Maximum)	Quarterly Incentive (Bonus)
2.1	75%	100%	6%	11%	\$100
2.2	72%	100%	7%	12%	\$200
2.3	69%	100%	8%	13%	\$300
2.4	66%	100%	9%	14%	\$400
2.5	63%	100%	10%	15%	\$500
2.6	63%	95%	10%	15%	\$600
2.7	63%	95%	10%	15%	\$700
2.8	63%	95%	10%	15%	\$800
2.9	63%	95%	10%	15%	\$900
3.0	63%	95%	10%	15%	\$1000

Table 5. Monetary Incentive Scale

Monetary Incentives Eligibility Requirements

- Recruiters must have a minimum of 15 months on production.
- Recruiters must be “on production.”
- Statistics will be recalculated and incentive payments made quarterly.
- Recruiters must have shipped a minimum of 25 recruits.
- All percentages will be rounded down.
- \$1000 will be the maximum bonus allowed per quarter.

The independent, mission-oriented nature of recruiting duty places a premium on the individual recruiter’s desire to enlist young men and women into our Corps. Increasing opportunities for secondary education, declining propensity for military service and civil/military pay disparities are but a few indicators that the challenges currently being faced by the Marine Corps Recruiting Command are not likely to go away. As such, prudence requires exploration of ways to increase the Marine Corps’

ability to enlist young men and women into its ranks. Focusing on increasing the individual recruiter's desire to produce more enlistments is one way of accomplishing this. A comprehensive, systemic program that offers monetary incentives designed to increase recruiter productivity throughout the duration of a 36 month tour is an option. It is this author's opinion that given the independent nature of recruiting duty and the time/distance challenges to command and control, an incentive program that rewards the individual recruiter for superior performance could be crafted in such a way as to not detract from team-building efforts or our warrior ethos and would complement those incentives currently in use.

APPENDIX A: MONETARY INCENTIVES SURVEY

This survey is being conducted to provide data for a Masters of Military Studies paper for a student at the Marine Corps Command & Staff College.

Thesis Statement: What is the feasibility of performance basing Special Duty Assignment (SDA) pay for Marine recruiters? Basically, the thesis is exploring the possibility of basing some or all of a recruiter's SDA pay on his/her individual performance as a means of increasing productivity.

SDA Policy: from Marine Corps Order (MCO) 7220.12m, encl 1, pg 1:

SDA pay is a monthly monetary incentive that is paid to enlisted members who are required to perform extremely demanding duties with an unusual degree of responsibility. The incentive is paid in addition to any pay and allowances to which the member is otherwise entitled. The pay may be awarded to an eligible member serving in a designated special duty assignment as listed in enclosure (2) of this Order. (Enclosure (2) indicates eligibility of recruiters for SDA pay; enclosure (3) indicates amount of SDA pay).

TEXT OF THE SURVEY

1. The Marine Corps currently provides monetary incentives (SDA pay) to selected occupational specialties (recruiters, drill instructors, etc.) Do you agree with this practice? Y or N

Comments:

2. The Marine Corps currently offers monetary incentives (flight pay) for aviators serving in a flight status. Do you agree with this practice? Y or N

Comments:

3. Do you think that the Marine Corps' use of money as a performance incentive is good policy? Y or N

Comments:

4. Given its wide use in civilian sales organizations, professional sports, etc., do you believe money is an effective performance incentive? Y or N

Comments:

5. Realistically, do you think money would be an effective performance incentive for Marine recruiters? Y or N

Comments:

6. Do you think a recruiter's SDA pay should in some way be related to his/her performance? Y or N

Comments:

7. If the Marine Corps were to adopt a performance related SDA pay system, which of the following options would you support:

Option A: All or Nothing

- If a recruiter meets established minimum performance standards, then he/she receives 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay. If the recruiter fails to meet the minimum performance standards, then he/she receives no SDA pay.

Option B: 50/50

- All recruiters receive 50% of authorized SDA pay regardless of performance. If a recruiter successfully meets established minimum performance standards, then he/she receives 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay.

Option C: Pro-rated

- The Marine Corps develops a performance scale and all SDA payments are made relative to that scale. For example: Standards could be established for three levels of performance and recruiters could earn 33%, 67% or 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay based on their performance.

8. If a performance based SDA pay system were implemented, what recruiting performance indicators (“stats”) should be considered? (APR, DEP/MCRD attrition, I-III A %, etc.)

Comments:

9. If a performance based SDA pay system were implemented, how frequently should a recruiter’s SDA pay be adjusted? (circle)

Monthly Quarterly Trimesterly Semiannually Annually

10. Do you think recruiters serving in “off-production” billets should receive:

- a. Full SDA pay
- b. Reduced SDA pay
- c. No SDA pay

Comments: _____

11. How many years have you served on recruiting duty?

Comments: _____

12. What billets have you held on recruiting duty?

Comments:

13. How long have you been in the Marine Corps?

Comments: _____

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS

There were no significant problems encountered during the conduct of this survey. Some questions were interpreted differently, and two questions (3 & 5) received numerous Yes and No answers on the same survey that were explained in the narrative comments. One hundred and fifty surveys were distributed; however, 208 surveys were returned. This abundant response coupled with the voluminous narrative comments testifies to the level of interest surrounding this topic. Nearly every respondent took the time to provide narrative comments with several attaching additional pages of input. The use of performance based incentives in general and monetary incentives appears to be an emotionally charged issue which nearly every respondent was either adamantly favored or opposed. The survey questions were specific about the use of SDA pay but more general with regard to the use of monetary incentives. I caution you against forming opinions based solely on the numerical data provided because frequently the answers to questions were given based upon qualifications annotated in the narrative comments. Also, not every question was answered by every respondent; I've annotated the number of responses to each question. I have included a comments section to each question, not as an interpretation of the numbers but in order to highlight the most common narrative responses.

1. The Marine Corps currently provides monetary incentives (SDA pay) to selected occupational specialties (recruiters, drill instructors, etc.) Do you agree with this practice? Y or N

Responses: 201

Yes: 198 (99%)

No: 3 (1%)

Comments: Most comments to this question referred to SDA pay as a monetary supplement to offset expenses incurred on independent duty that Marines stationed on bases do not incur. Other justifications offered for SDA pay were compensation for work hours, lost holidays (72's & 96's) and family separation.

2. The Marine Corps currently offers monetary incentives (flight pay) for aviators serving in a flight status. Do you agree with this practice? Y or N

Responses: 198

Yes: 170 (86%)

No: 28 (14%)

Comments: Most respondents felt flight pay was not only deserved but an effective incentive for retaining aviators.

3. Do you think that the Marine Corps' use of money as a performance incentive is good policy? Y or N

Responses: 203

Yes: 85 (42%)

No: 118 (58%)

Comments: Difficult to determine a Yes or No consensus using the numerical data because of the many qualifications placed on each answer. Also, many respondents answered both yes and no feeling that some uses were effective while others were not. Opinions for and against were offered with regard to flight pay, SDA pay for recruiters, drill instructors, MSG Marines, recruiting bonuses and reenlistment bonuses.

4. Given its wide use in civilian sales organizations, professional sports, etc., do you believe money is an effective performance incentive? Y or N

Responses: 181

Yes: 130 (72%)

No: 51 (28%)

Comments: Most comments highlighted the distinction between civilians and Marines and felt a comparison could not be made.

5. Realistically, do you think money would be an effective performance incentive for Marine recruiters? Y or N

Responses: 218

Yes: 119 (55%)

No: 99 (45 %)

Comments: This question received the most narrative comments in the survey.

Respondents indicated strong feelings either for or against the use of money as a performance incentive. There were also many Yes and No answers from the same respondent on this question. These respondents acknowledged that money would be a good incentive to some but would encourage others to commit unethical recruiting practices in order to get the money.

6. Do you think a recruiter's SDA pay should in some way be related to his/her performance? Y or N

Responses: 202

Yes: 39 (19%)

No: 163 (81%)

Comments: Respondents in favor of performance basing SDA pay made reference to either rewarding overachievers or not rewarding underachievers.

Those opposed to performance basing SDA pay were near unanimous in their opinions that SDA pay is intended/used as a supplement to offset the costs of independent duty and that it should not be related to performance.

7. If the Marine Corps were to adopt a performance related SDA pay system, which of the following options would you support:

Option A: All or Nothing

- If a recruiter meets established minimum performance standards, then he/she receives 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay.

If the recruiter fails to meet the minimum performance standards, then he/she receives no SDA pay.

Option B: 50/50

- All recruiters receive 50% of authorized SDA pay regardless of performance. If a recruiter successfully meets established minimum performance standards, then he/she receives 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay.

Option C: Pro-rated

- The Marine Corps develops a performance scale and all SDA payments are made relative to that scale. For example: Standards could be established for three levels of performance and recruiters could earn 33%, 67% or 100% of the authorized amount of SDA pay based on their performance.

Responses: 118

Option A: 26 (22%)

Option B: 48 (41%)

Option C: 33 (28%)

Other Suggestions: 11 (9%)

Comments: The numerical data is misleading and not representative of the survey respondents views because most felt SDA pay should not be related to performance. As a result, many respondents left questions 7, 8 and 9 blank. Others provided answers to questions 7, 8 and 9 under the condition that if a performance based system were implemented which they would prefer. There were also 11 suggestions for other monetary incentive options some of which are addressed in the thesis body.

8. If a performance based SDA pay system were implemented, what recruiting performance indicators (“stats”) should be considered? (APR, DEP/MCRD attrition, I-III A %, etc.)

<u>All</u>	<u>APR Only</u>	<u>DEP Attrit</u>	<u>MCRD Attrit</u>	<u>Quality</u>
46	58	27	25	9

Comments: The five categories above were recommended most often. The All category refers to all of the above categories. The other categories indicate that they are the only criteria the respondent felt should be considered. Other criteria were recommended (high school milestone attainment, ability to fill critical MOSs/programs, quantity of active vs. reserve enlistments, etc.) and can be found in the surveys themselves.

9. If a performance based SDA pay system were implemented, how frequently should a recruiter's SDA pay be adjusted? (circle)

Total Responses: 114

<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>	<u>Trimesterly</u>	<u>Semiannually</u>	<u>Annually</u>
52	33	8	9	12

10. Do you think recruiters serving in "off-production" billets should receive:

- a. Full SDA pay
- b. Reduced SDA pay
- c. No SDA pay

Responses: 198

Full SDA Pay 89 (45%)

Reduced SDA Pay 58 (29%)

No SDA Pay: 51 (26%)

Comments: Many answers to this question also came with qualifications. Most proponents of full SDA pay felt "off-production" recruiters incurred the same independent duty expenses as "on-production" recruiters and were therefore entitled to full SDA pay. Those in favor of reduced SDA pay felt that "off-production" recruiters' were subjected to less stressful working hours/conditions and should therefore receive less SDA pay. Respondents who felt "off-production" recruiters rated no SDA pay did so largely because "off-production" recruiters were not assigned a mission to recruit anyone and should therefore not receive SDA pay.

11. How many years have you served on recruiting duty?

Responses: 208

<u><12 Mon</u>	<u>12-23 Mon</u>	<u>24-36 Mon</u>	<u>3-6 Yr</u>	<u>6-9 Yr</u>	<u>10-12 Yr</u>	<u>25 Yr</u>
67	39	50	43	5	3	1

12. What billets have you held on recruiting duty?

<u>Recruiter</u>	<u>NCOIC</u>	<u>RS Command Group</u>	<u>District/Region/MCRC Staff</u>
188	51	31	13

Comments: Many respondents have served in more than one billet and are being counted in each billet category in which they have served.

13. How long have you been in the Marine Corps?

<u>Respondent Years of Service</u>											
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>
2	1	10	16	38	20	15	17	19	8	10	11
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>31</u>		
11	6	5	4	2	1	1	3	1	1		

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